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ABSTRACT

This report describes the activities of the Rural Education Research and Development Centre at James Cook University (Queensland, Australia). The center is responsible for implementing research into rural education, training teachers to work in rural areas, and implementing projects related to rural education. The center is an academic unit administratively supported by the university, but largely funded from community, business, and industry sources. Center activities have included: (1) a conference in 1990 highlighting rural education research that led to the formation of the Rural Education Research Association and the establishment of a network for parents, teachers, community groups, and researchers to focus on research issues and priorities in rural education; (2) development of a rural education database that promotes communication among researchers, teachers, parents, and community organizations; (3) implementation of rural education undergraduate and graduate courses, and development of a Masters and Ph.D. program in rural education; (4) sponsoring research relating to access of rural communities to higher education, statistical comparison of rural and urban completion rates in tertiary education, and needs analysis of federally funded education programs. The report also contains a listing of national and international associations affiliated with the center; future developments concerning teaching, research, and conferences; and information pertaining to management and finances. Appendices include information on program endowment and development. (LP)

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RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH and DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

REPORT

1992

RC 018951

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RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

REPORT 1992

Sponsors: Queensland Industry Development Corporation
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Report 1992 prepared by Dr. David McSwan

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

RERDC aims to provide leadership, facilities, services and resources to achieve excellence in research, teaching, and development to benefit generally all people living in rural and isolated areas.

Foundation planning of the Centre commenced in 1984; the establishment document was approved by Council in March, 1988; Council's decision to establish, with funds to be donated, Australia's first Chair in Rural Education, was also taken in March, 1988. The Centre commenced operation in late 1989 with the appointment of Professor Jack Walton as a Temporary Director/Visiting Professor.

Centre staff research and teaching interests embrace rural education and development aspects of curriculum, statistical modelling, access and equity, minority and disadvantaged groups, economic and community development, demography, rural health, and social change. The Centre has a small "core" staff, expanded on a needs/project basis and supplemented by a number of honorary visiting consultants and fellows.

Management of the Centre is vested in the Centre Advisory Committee, Centre Management Committee and Director. The Appeal Committee comprises community and university members chaired by a voluntary community member from western Queensland.

As well as teaching specialist courses at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels, the Centre also offers fee-paying non-award courses. To date, three doctorates have been awarded to Centre students and current enrolments in all courses and subjects are growing significantly.

In 1990 the Centre hosted Australia's first conference in Rural Education which has: encouraged the growth of other centres, and courses in some universities; publications; led to the formation of the Rural Education Research Association and been partly responsible for the vigorous growth of interest in rural education issues Australia wide.

A number of consultancy projects have been completed for state and federal departments and organisations. As well, the Centre has contributed to a number of federal reviews and enquiries related to rural issues in Australia.

The Centre has established an international identity and stimulated an interest in an International Conference on Rural Education and Development to be held in Townsville in July, 1994. Related to this is the Centre's initiative in offering a doctorate for international students in Rural Education and Development, the planning of which is well advanced. Both projects involve leading overseas academics and a submission for major funding to an American foundation is in preparation.

A number of Australian and international scholars have visited the Centre, largely attracted by the nature of the Centre and the teaching and research being undertaken. Centre Reports and Newsletter have been very effective in reaching the "rural" audience; some material having been reprinted in American publications.

The Appeal for funding of the Chair in Rural Education and the Centre has been severely inhibited by the general recession and the crisis in the rural industries. However, approximately a quarter of a million dollars has been received which is sufficient to look to the future with some optimism.

University recurrent grants, when supplemented by earnings from donations; teaching, course fees, and consultancy, enable the Centre to maintain a base level of services and facilities.

Were the RERDC to achieve its national potential, it would become a centre having international importance (because no other has created a truly first-rate rural education and development unit yet). However, the international connection could and should consist of more than leading by example. I remain certain that JCU is uniquely well-qualified to establish itself as the world centre in this field. The plans we have discussed for a rural education and development PhD program drawing on international faculty and student population strike me as being eminently sound, worthwhile and feasible. Indeed, the Rural Centre could put James Cook University "on the map", internationally, to an extent I cannot imagine being true of any other area within the field of education. Similarly, the international conference you have on the drawing board for 1994 promises to be a much-needed, well-timed and influential event.

Jonathan Sher
Founding Director
North Carolina Real Enterprises
2 March, 1992.
(See Appendix D)

A MESSAGE FROM THE APPEAL CHAIRMAN

I believe there is a pressing need to continue to develop and expand the functions of this Centre - the only one at a national level - if we are to continue to provide effective and responsible assistance to those who live in rural Australia. All of us who have lived in remote areas know the real traumas of coping with problems on our own. Isolation is not purely psychological - there are physical elements of time and cost in trying to span long distances - with inadequate means of communication or travelling great distances on indifferent roads.

If we are to develop the natural resources of this great country we need to keep a workforce in rural areas. To do this, it is necessary to improve the quality of life for women and children so that the family unit is kept intact. Accordingly, the Centre provides special kinds of services to cater for educational needs of rural students, home tutors, and teachers. We need to finance the operations of the Centre and build further the trust fund which will enable us to appoint Australia's first Professor of Rural Education and Development.

To date the Centre, operating on the tightest budget possible, has made excellent progress in undergraduate and graduate teaching, as well as initiating national conferences and an association of Australian educators, researchers, community groups and policy makers who have interests in rural education. The consultancy work completed and in progress promises to do much to assist governments and agencies to serve better the people in rural and isolated areas.

I am particularly pleased to see that the Centre is attracting interest from overseas people working in rural education and development. The recent visits of Dr. Jonathan Sher and Dr. Jack Shelton testify to the international significance of the Centre.

I am confident that the planned 1994 international conference and the development of the rural education doctoral program will establish this Centre as one of the key centres in the world for teaching, research and development in areas of rural education and community and economic development.

To achieve these most important objectives I believe the Centre must attract much higher levels of support from within the university and from the people and industries who depend on rural Australia for their livelihood.

To ensure the survival of the Centre during this period of economic recession and to achieve the programs arising from the recent overseas visit by our Director, Dr. David McSwan, and so well described by Dr. Jonathan Sher, significant funding is required urgently.

Lady Logan
Chairman
RERDC Appeal Committee

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C - "Duncragan"

D - Letters from Dr. J. Sher and Professor J. Shelton

RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Aims

The Centre has three main aims relating to the achievement of excellence in:

i) research into rural education;
ii) the training of teachers at in-service and post-graduate level to work and research in rural areas; and
iii) development projects arising from research.

Objectives

Objectives of the Centre are to:

i) provide facilities and resources dedicated to achieving excellence in: research into rural education, developmental projects related to education in rural areas, teaching in rural areas, and specialist tertiary courses;

ii) conduct and facilitate conferences, seminars and workshops on rural education;

iii) act as a national clearing house for matters related to rural education;

iv) conduct research into, and comment on, rural education issues;

v) provide a consultancy service for appropriate outside bodies; and

vi) seek to benefit generally all people in rural and remote areas who have particular educational needs.

Historical Development

In the early eighties a number of informal meetings took place at James Cook University of people interested in the problems of rural and isolated areas. In 1984, in association with the Australian Rural Adjustment Unit (ARAU) a rural interest group was formed including members of the University staff at James Cook University, the Department of Primary Industries, the Burdekin Rural Education Centre, the CSIRO and other people from organisations associated with rural development. From these various meetings emerged the proposition for a conference to be held in Northern Queensland to focus on rural issues related to that area. The objectives of the conference which was to be known as the "Needs of the West", were as follows:

i) to provide a forum whereby residents of North West Queensland can present their views on the range of non-industry problems evident in small towns of the region;

ii) to promote the inter-change of ideas and information among individuals from different towns, community groups, and government departments with a view to clarifying specific problems and issues which urgently require attention from community groups, existing service organisations, government departments, or local, state and federal governments; and

iii) to establish task groups, either regional or national to pursue specific issues in order to resolve existing problems.

The conference was very successful, attracting considerable interest at both Federal and State levels. Industry and community leaders, as well as the regional media in North Queensland, also supported the conference. One hundred and sixty people in all attended the conference. Two publications

resulted from the conference - *Isolated Communities: A Major Report on Rural Australia* and *Needs of the West* which listed the main recommendations, classified into six categories. These categories were: Aboriginal Issues; Communication; Education; Employment and Small Businesses; Health and Welfare. Emerging from the many recommendations was a recognition of the role that James Cook University was already playing in rural education and the suggestion that possibly that role could be extended.

It is important to view this conference and the role of rural education at James Cook University against a growing, world wide concern for rural education. As Sher (1981) stated:[1]

In the past five years, a major shift in attitudes and policies towards rural education has occurred in many OECD nations. After decades of relative obscurity, issues surrounding the nature and provision of educational services in sparsely populated areas have re-emerged and begun to occupy a prominent position on national education agendas.

Australia was no exception, a National Centre for Research on Rural Education had been established at the University of Western Australia. For a few years its publications were influential. The Federal Government also, at a later date, began to take an interest in the rural scene, although it was not until 1988 that a specific statement was made by the publication *Schooling in Rural Australia*. There is no doubt that such community-driven organisations as the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) played a very important part in directing both State and Federal Governments' attention to rural problems. More recently, the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) has joined the ranks of those community groups placing pressure on governments.

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1 Sher, J.P. (ed) *Rural Education in Urbanised Nations: Issues and Innovations.* Westview Press/Boulder Colorado

It was in this period, when rural education began to occupy a more prominent position on both state and federal education agendas, that the "Needs of the West" conference took place. Ten years earlier its impact would have been much less.

The conference was certainly a stimulus to further development as far as rural education was concerned. Meetings took place after the conference of community members and members of the University to consider what other steps should be taken, bearing in mind the recommendations emerging from the conference. Within the University a small group of key people kept alive the idea of a larger commitment of the University to rural communities. Rural education became more visible in the courses and practice teaching placements provided for students. Papers written by staff members were read by the larger academic community throughout Australia. The Federal Government invited one of the James Cook University rural education group to undertake a study of schooling in rural Queensland and the Northern Territory, a study which contributed to the School Commission's Report *Schooling in Rural Australia* (1988).

By this time it seemed that the National Centre for Research in Rural Education (based in Perth) would not continue because of the departure of key members of staff and the discontinuation of government funding. In fact, by the end of 1988 it could be said that there was no National Centre associated with rural education in Australia.

The Development of the Rural Education Research & Development Centre as a National Centre

It was the growing interest in and concern for rural education at James Cook University, its very solid links with the rural community, the growing national interest in rural education and the disappearance of the National Centre in Perth that, together, prompted an investigation into the possibility of creating a Chair in Rural Education at James Cook University.

In the discussions that followed, it was decided that such a Chair should be community funded (See Appendix A) as would be a Rural Education Research and Development Centre associated with that Chair. (Appendix B presents the Establishment Document of the Centre). In early 1988 an Appeal Committee was formed with Lady Logan, a grazier's wife, as its chairman. It is worthwhile quoting the statement she made in the Appeal brochure:

> *I believe there is a pressing need to develop this Centre - the only one at a national level - if we are to continue to provide effective and responsible assistance to those who live in rural Australia. All of us who have lived in remote areas know the real traumas of coping with problems on our own. Isolation is not purely psychological - there are the physical elements of time and cost in trying to span long distances - with inadequate means of communication or travelling great distances on indifferent roads.*
>
> *If we are to develop the natural resources of this great country, we need to keep a workforce in rural areas. To do this, it is necessary to improve the quality of life for women and children so that the family unit is kept intact. Accordingly, the Centre has aims to provide special kinds of services to cater for the educational needs of rural students and teachers. We need to provide buildings and equipment to endow it as a National Centre in Rural Education.*

The Appeal was officially launched in Mt. Isa on the evening of Saturday, May 27, 1989. The launch was extremely successful, cheques ranged from $50,000 from Mt. Isa Mines Holdings Limited to smaller, individual contributions.

The particular emphasis of the Appeal was to endow a Chair in Rural Education. As the Appeal brochure stated:

The establishment of the Chair signifies the special concern of the community to foster a new era of scholarship and research.

In order to provide high-level leadership and the capacity to undertake significant teaching and research the decision was made to appoint a Visiting Professor of Rural Education, on a short-term contract, to initiate the work of the Rural Education Research and Development Centre. Such a Professor would direct the activities of the infant centre until it was possible to make a more permanent appointment utilising the Appeal Fund monies.

Thus, from rather small beginnings earlier in the eighties a new National Centre in the field of rural education is being created at James Cook University. This new Centre is an academic unit within the University supported by the administrative infra-structure of the university but largely financed from the community, business and industry.

The University has made available to the Centre "Duncragan" (see Appendix C) quite a large house in the city which now renovated, painted and furnished using donated funds and work, is very suitable for the Centre's current activities.

The Centre has been fortunate in the support it has received financially from the community and in human resources from State instrumentalities. Financial contributions have ranged from $100,000 donated by the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, $50,000 donated by Mr. Isa Mines, $45,000 donated by National Australia Bank, to smaller sums donated by shire councils and individuals. Commencing in 1990 the Queensland Department of Education has, for example, seconded on full salary two if its officers to undertake doctoral programs and contribute to the work of the Centre for two year periods. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission did the same thing with one of its officers. In addition, other States in

Australia are now considering seconding people for rather shorter periods, but on similar terms as those seconded from the Queensland State Department of Education and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

As research is one of the particular concerns of the Centre it has responded to nationally advertised calls for submissions in areas relating to rural concerns. Four such submissions have been made, one relating to access of rural communities to higher education, another relating to a statistical comparison of rural and urban completion rates in tertiary education, and a third concerned with a needs analysis of the federally funded Priority Country Area Program in Queensland.

As part of its development activities the Centre hosted in June, 1990 Australia's first "Think Tank" on Research in Rural Education. This has proven to be a timely and valuable contribution to scholarship and research. One outcome of the "Think Tank" is the development, sponsored by the Centre, of the Rural Education Research Association (RERA) which brings together from across Australia parents, teachers, community groups and researchers to focus on research issues and priorities in rural education. RERA plans to sponsor annual conferences on rural education issues. The inaugural conference which attracted approximately seventy participants, was held in Alice Springs on the theme "Education, Equity, and the Crisis in the Rural Community".

The training of teachers and researchers to work in the rural field is a very real concern of the Centre. A pre-service course for teachers who wish to teach in rural areas is offered as well as an in-service course for teachers in the field who wish to gain a higher qualification in education. Perhaps the major development is the creation of a new Masters degree specialising in rural education (the only such degree in the world) which, for those who show particular expertise in its research components, serves as a qualification for entry into a PhD program.

Recent contacts and interaction with scholars in Canada, United States, Scotland, Sweden and Norway have publicised the Centre and several initiatives of particular significance are now in hand including the exchange of masters students, an international doctoral program in rural education and development and an international conference to be held in Townsville in 1994.

Future prospects for the Centre both nationally and internationally are extremely encouraging and, given adequate funding and support from within the University, and the community the Centre can realistically aspire to achieve a position of international leadership in the field of rural education and development. (See letters from Dr. Sher and Dr. Shelton, - Appendix D)

CENTRE STAFF AND INTERESTS

Director:

McSWAN, Dr. David - BA MEd MEc (Reg Plan) PhD

Teaching in rural areas, teacher recruitment for rural areas, teacher training for rural areas, teacher stability in rural areas, rural education support services, international rural education.

Visiting Professor

WALTON, Professor Jack - MA DipEd CertEd

Rurality, interpretations of rurality and their implications, rural education, access to education in rural areas, research in rural education throughout Australia.

Consultant:

SCOTT, Emeritus Professor Edward - AM BA Phd

Rural education, research design and methodology, international rural education, teacher education.

Visiting Fellows:

GLEN, Mr. Matthew - DipT BEd MEd

Community and school relationship, participation in school decision making in rural communities.

STAUNTON, Mr. Mike - BEd DipSchCouns MEdSt

Rural education, quality of teaching, counselling

Honorary Visiting Fellows:

GRIFFITH, Mr. Dennis - Llb

Statistical modelling, development of spatial models of disadvantage in rural and remote areas in Australia.

McSHANE, Sr. Miriam - DipT DipTheol BA BD MCurrSt

Boarding education, boarding schools in Queensland, their concerns and aspirations.

SHELTON, Dr. Jack - AB BD PhD

Rural Schooling, community development, rural health.

CENTRE ACTIVITIES

"Think Tank" on Research in Rural Education

The Centre hosted the first national "Think Tank" of rural educators, researchers, administrators, policy-makers, and community organisations including ICPA and SPERA at the Sheraton Breakwater Casino-Hotel 10-14 June, 1990.

Over 60 invited participants came from all States and Territories of Australia to focus on the following objectives:

i) to provide future directions in research into rural education in Australia;

ii) to develop a forward plan of research;

iii) to form a consortium of researchers into rural education; and

iv) to consider launching a journal of rural education research as the official organ of the consortium.

The conference was highly successful and all the objectives were achieved. A comprehensive report on the "Think Tank" is available, including keynote papers and reports on working groups. The report is on sale for $25.00 plus $5.00 postage from the University Bookshop.

Sponsors of the "Think Tank" included: Ansett, Australian Airlines, Dalgetys, DEET, Hannas, Ira Berk (Toowoomba), Sheraton, Townsville City Council and Telecom.

Rural Education Research Association

An outcome of the "Think Tank" in 1990 was the Centre's sponsorship of the development of the Rural Education Research Association whose aims are to:

i) establish a communication network for a diverse constituency of institutions and people who have an interest in and commitment to research issues affecting people living in rural areas across Australia;

ii) be concerned with research associated with education for all school, post-school and adult students in rural areas;

iii) support research which is broad in its methodology and range of questions;

iv) develop and maintain a database relating to research and development in rural education; and

v) establish contact with similar associations overseas.

Rural Education Database

In 1990 the Centre developed the "Rural Education" database in the "Keylink" system. With the advent of the Rural Education Research Association responsibility for the further development of the database has been transferred to the Association which plans to establish an efficient communication system capable of linking diverse groups of people who have an interest and commitment to rural and distance education.

Hosted by the Queensland Department of Education, the Rural Education Research Association has formed a subdivision of "Keylink". As Telecom's national electronic mail service, "Keylink" enables instant and multiple communication among researchers, teachers, parents and community organisations.

In addition, the Association is facilitating the development of a Keylink connection with Australian Curriculum Information Network. Once established, such a link has the potential to benefit school communities and education researchers across the nation.

TEACHING

i) Award Courses

Course	Enrolments 1990	1991	1992	1993
i) *Award Courses**				
MEd (Rural Education)	N/A	4	2	4
PhD at 1 March	3	4	3	3
PhD (offshore)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Subjects				
Rural Practice (new course)	N/A	N/A	N/A	15
SD3570: Rural Education (Undergraduate)	50	Nil	73	80
SD3570: Rural Education (Inservice)	14	14	22	20

(SD5170 Rural Education: Myths & Realities)	N/A	11	7	10
ii) *Non Award Courses* (Fee paying)				
Care & Supervision (Ext)	N/A	N/A	48	60
Home Tutors Course (Ext)	N/A	N/A	10 (pilot)	20

*Each year the Centre organises a Rural Professional Experience for up to 20 students

Subject descriptions

SD3570: Rural Education

This subject introduces students to the community, social and professional roles of the teacher in rural and isolated areas. It focuses on the multi-faceted role of the school as a central component of the rural community; the administrative and organisational responsibilities of teachers and principals; the interpretation and development of appropriate curriculum statements; the identification and utilisation of community and environmental resources; classroom organisation; support services and systems provided by the Education Department; parent organisations; evaluation of teaching materials; and modern communications technology and services available to rural and isolated areas.

"Rural Education" aims to have students acquire knowledge and develop understandings and attitudes which will enable them to appreciate the role of schools and teachers in rural and isolated areas. Knowledge of the demographic, economic, social, cultural, and community conditions and traditions of country areas provides a most important orientation for teachers who may find employment in rural communities.

Rural Practice Teaching

With financial assistance from the North West Area Priority Country Area Program in Longreach the Centre has, over the past three years, placed third and fourth year teacher education students in rural and remote schools for periods of up to six weeks. The scheme has been very successful and formal

evaluation of it has highlighted that the experience is very successful in creating positive attitudes to teaching in remote areas.

Masters Degree in Rural Education

This degree emphasises rural concerns. The schedule, listed below, indicates that it consists of three course work units and a three unit thesis. The course work gives students an insight into recent research/development associated with rural education, an appropriate background in research methodology and an opportunity to explore in depth a particular field which may be relevant to their future thesis. The three unit thesis is directed at some issue in rural education of interest to the student.

Course Schedule

Six units consisting of:

i) SD5170 Rural Education: Myths and Realities (A compulsory vacation school); and

ii) one of:
LD5100 Research Methods for Language and Media Studies in Education
PD5100 Empirical Research Design and Methodology in Education
SD5100 Foundations of Qualitative Educational Research

iii) one other subject from Subject Schedule A (available on application to Faculty of Education);

iv) a three unit thesis in the field of rural education.

The degree has been planned to have a certain unity, there being a distinct relationship between the course units and the

thesis. Some students, however, may take SD5170 as a component of other Masters of Education degrees within the Faculty of Education if they so wish. The subject SD5170 Rural Education: Myths and Realities, is described below.

SD5170 Rural Education: Myths and Realities

This subject aims to acquaint students with people living in rural Australia. Appropriate theoretical constructs are drawn upon and tested against practical situations. Examples of successful and unsuccessful attempts to meet rural education needs are given. The course content is illuminated by the results of recent research undertaken in Queensland, other states, and, where appropriate, abroad. A component of the course is a field excursion in an isolated community in North Queensland. Different communities are selected for different cohorts of students in order that people living in the more isolated regions will become aware of the university's interest in and concern for them.

Doctoral Program

1991 **Ian Crease** was awarded his doctorate. His thesis was entitled "Supporting Disabled Students in Rural Queensland: An Exploratory Study".

1992 Two doctorates were awarded.

Colin Boylan, whose thesis was entitled "The Identification of Factors that Influence Rural Teachers to Choose to Remain Teaching in the Riverina Region of New South Wales for Extended Periods of Time"

Stephen Clark, whose thesis was entitled "Rural Education, or Education in Rural Areas: An Exploratory Study in Queensland".

ii) Non-Award, Fee-Paying Courses (External Studies)

Care and Supervision in Primary and Secondary Boarding Schools, Hostels, and Family Group Homes. (Prepared by Dr. Barry J. Duncan)

This course aims to provide skills in, and knowledge of, care and supervision to:

i) men and women who are employed in residential institutions, particularly boarding schools, hostels and family group homes;

ii) men and women who are aspiring to employment in the above; and

iii) men and women who were formerly employed in the above and who wish to return to such employment.

Coursework units include:

i) Child-Growth and Adolescent Development;

ii) Pastoral Care in Residential Institutions;

iii) Effective Administration and Supervision in Residential Institutions;

iv) Counselling Skills;

v) Health, Fitness, Nutrition and First Aid; and

vi) Recreation and Leisure.

Course fee - $275.
The course is suitable for the Training Guarantee Scheme.

Home Tutor's Course

This course, to be developed this year, (subject to external funding) aims to provide knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the needs of mothers/home tutors whose children are enrolled in Schools of Distance Education throughout Australia

The program will be trialled August-November of this year.

Publications

1990: Clark, S. Rural Education Research: A "State of the Art" Review. Rural Education Research & Development Centre, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville.

McShane, Sr. M., and Walton, J. (Eds) Think Tank on Research in Rural Education. Rural Education Research & Development Centre, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville.

McSwan, D. (Ed) "Rural Education" Vol. 1. (Newsletter of RERDC)

1991 Crease, I. "Supporting Disabled Children in Rural Queensland" Pedals, Summer.

Crease, I. "Supporting Disabled Children in Rural Queensland: An Exploratory Study." (PhD thesis.)

Crease, I. "Supporting Students with Disabilities in Rural Queensland" Education in Rural Australia, 1, 2, pp. 17-28.

Crowther, F., Postle, G., and Walton, J. Needs Analysis of the Priority Country Area Program in Queensland. Rural Education Research & Development Centre, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville.

McShane, Sr. M. "An assessment of the present and possible future role of the Catholic Community in Higher Education".

McSwan, D. and Glen, M. (Eds) "Rural Education" Vol. 2. (Newsletter of RERDC.)

Walton, J. and Scriven, B. An Analysis of Persons from Remote and Rural Areas in Higher Education. Rural Education Research & Development Centre, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville and Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove.

1992 Boylan, C. "The Identification of Factors that Influence Rural Teachers to Choose to Remain Teaching in the Riverina Area of NSW for Extended Periods of Time." (PhD thesis.)

McSwan, D. (Ed) "Rural Education" Vol. 3. (Newsletter of RERDC.) Forthcoming.

Walton, J. (Ed) Experiences in Rural Education Rural Education Research & Development Centre, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville. (Forthcoming)

McSwan, D. "Rural Education Research & Development Centre." Rural Affairs Clearinghouse Newsletter, 3.

National and International Associations

i) National

State Department of Education; Priority Country Area Program; Catholic Education; Isolated Children's Parents' Association; Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia; Technical and Further Education Colleges; University of Queensland; University of Southern Queensland; University of Central Queensland; Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology;

University of New England; University of Western Sydney; Charles Sturt University; University of Western Australia; Northern Territory University; Telecom Australia; Department of Primary Industries & Energy; Department of Employment, Education & Training; National Board of Employment, Education and Training.

ii) International

University of Wellington, New Zealand; University of Victoria, British Columbia; National Rural Development Institute, Western Washington University, Washington; Centre for Cross-Regional Studies, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; North West Education Laboratory Oregon; Oregon State University; Rural Institute, Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory, Denver, Colorado; North Carolina Real Enterprises, Chapel Hill; Centre for Rural Education & Small Schools, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Charleston, West Virginia; University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; Dartmouth College, New Hampshire; Northern College of Aberdeen, Scotland; Uppsala University, Sweden; Tromso University, Norway; Lulea University College, Sweden; University of Umea, Sweden; University College of Harnosand.

CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Teaching:

1992:
- Development of an external studies course for home tutors
- Planning of international doctoral program in rural education and development

1993:
- Introduction of a second undergraduate elective subject in rural education.

- Introduction of the international doctoral program in rural education and development by way of a two-week orientation seminar for students and overseas supervising faculty.

- The structuring of an international group of scholars able to teach, on a contract basis, undergraduate and graduate courses in Rural Education and Development. A number of institutions eg. University of Victoria have expressed immediate interest in this proposal as they wish to teach such programs, but are unable to justify appointment of specialist staff.

1994

- Preparation of a short course on leadership in rural communities to be taught by seminar and workshop in regional centres

- Exchange of students in MEd (Rural Education with University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Research

1991:

- The Identification of Factors that Influence Teachers to Remain Teaching in the Riverina Regional of NSW for Extended Periods of Time - Colin Boylan

- Supporting Disabled Students in Rural Queensland: An Exploratory Analysis - Ian Crease

- An Analysis of the Participation of Persons from Remote and Rural Areas in Higher Education - Jack Walton & David McSwan in association with Bruce Scriven of Queensland University of Technology.

- A Needs Analysis of the Priority Country Area Program in Queensland - Jack Walton in association with Frank Crowther and Glen Postle of the University College of Southern Queensland.

- Rural Education or Education in Rural Areas: Which Should Underpin Education Policy Making? - Steve Clark.

- A Comparison of Community Participation in a Rural and Urban School - Jacqueline Dewar (a Centre funded project)

1992:

- Rural Education or Education in Rural Areas: Which Should Underpin Education Policy Making? - Steve Clark.

- A Comparison of Community Participation in a Rural and Urban School - Jacqueline Dewar (a Centre funded project)

- Instructional Flexibility in Urban and Rural Secondary Classrooms in North Queensland: A Comparative Study - Mike Staunton

- Community Participation in School Decision- Making: A Case Study of Power and Discourse in a P-12 Rural School - Matthew Glen

- Establishing Criteria for Equitable Identification of Client Groups which have Limited Access to Social, Cultural and Educational Activities as a Result of their Geographic Isolation - D. Griffith and D. McSwan

- A Needs Analysis of Home Tutors - Sr. Miriam McShane.

Conferences

International:

- It is proposed that the Centre hosts, in mid-1994, an international conference on Rural Education and Development. One objective of the conference is to form an international association of scholars and development personnel working in these fields. Preliminary discussions in the U.S., U.K., Sweden and Norway have produced a high level of commitment and support. Dr. Sher has undertaken to assist in drafting a submission for funding to the Ford Foundation over the signatures of RERDC and senior scholars in the U.S.

National:

- The Centre will continue to support and participate in annual conferences of the Rural Education Research Association, the national body formed following the Centre-sponsored "Think Tank on Research in Rural Education" held in 1990.

- Negotiations with the Queensland Department of Education are being undertaken with a view to jointly hosting a national conference on teacher education for rural and isolated schooling.

CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

Centre Management

The management of the Centre is vested in:

- the Director;
- the Centre Advisory Committee; and
- the Centre Management Committee.

NOTE: Appendix B "Establishment Document" sets out full details of the management of the Centre.

The University is committed to the Centre. All details relating to management, structure, and finance have been approved by Council. The University has made available its service infrastructure for the administrative support of the Centre and all Centre accounts and funds are handled as part of the normal operation of the University. Staff appointments are made using normal University procedure. The University has made available accommodation for the Centre ("Duncragan") which was renovated free of charge by the Queensland Department of Works.

Without this basic support of the University the development of the Centre would have been impossible.

Centre Finances

Current position

The Centre receives funds from the following sources:

University annual recurrent grant;
*Donations to the Appeal Fund (Chair of Rural Education);
Donations to the general operating account;
Donations to special purpose accounts - eg publications;
Sale of publications;
Contract research and consultancies; and
Fee paying courses
*See Appendix D

Financial Position at 29 February & 22 June 1992:

		29th Feb	22 June
General fund	(32395)	14,579.48 cr	12,363.21
Library	(27073)	6,730.71 cr	6,305.25
Research	(25658)	2,952.39 cr	6,339.50
Publications	(29513)	3,922.52 cr	13,104.21
Salaries	(32387)	28,817.13 cr	19,554.25
*Appeal	(22365)	151,829.34 cr	152,476.84

*At 22 June, 1992 total donations were $248,090.51 plus outstanding interest

Other Income 1990-1992

Needs Analysis of PCAP in Queensland (PCAP)		4,317
An Analysis of Persons from Remote & Rural Areas in Higher Education (DEET)		8,321
Professional Experience (PCAP	1990	970
	1991	1,300
	1992	5,305
Establishing Criteria for the Equitable Identification of Client Groups (PCAP)		18,319
Care & Supervision (External Course)		12,375
Sale of Publications		1,525
TOTAL		$ 52,432

Budget

Expenditure

Office		
Xerox lease & service cost for photocopier	3,200	
Fax lease & service/paper	1,300	
Stationery etc.	1,500	
Phone/Fax	8,000	
Petty Cash	1,000	
Cleaning (2 hrs per week)	1,300	
Postage	1,200	
		17,500
Salaries		
Secretary - 10 hrs per week	6,000	
Sr. Miriam - (Consultancy Fee)	2,000	
		8,000
Travel & Accommodation + Telephone/Fax		
Professor Walton	2,000	
Sr. Miriam McShane	2,000	
Dr. David McSwan	2,000	
		6,000
TOTAL		**31,500**

DONATIONS

i) **Appeal Fund**

Pledged donations

Queensland Industry Development Corporation
$100,000 over five years

Burdekin Shire Council
$1,000 over three years (now complete)

Richmond Shire Council
$2,500 over five years

National Australia Bank
$45,000 over three years

G.J. Landsberg
$2,000 over two years

1989

		$
15 March	Charters Towers ICPA	50.00
20 May	McIntyre & Associates	2,500.00
30 May	MIM Holdings Ltd.	50,000.00
30 May	I.C.P.A.	100.00
31 May	J.M. Mott	500.00
05 June	Sir. Bruce Watson	2,000.00
14 June	Mt. Isa City Council	1,000.00
14 June	C.M. & C. Chalmers	100.00
29 June	Mr. & Mrs. D.H. Pearse	500.00
06 July	Etheridge Shire Council	1,000.00
08 August	Kingaroy Shire Council	100.00
16 August	National Australia Bank	15,000.00
22 August	ANZ Banking Group Ltd.	5,000.00
06 September	Winton Shire Council	2,000.00
07 September	Burdekin Shire Council	1,000.00
22 September	ANZ Bank (N. Linthwaite)	5,000.00
	Sub total 1989 donations	85,850.00

1990

13 February,	Richmond Shire Council	500.00
09 May	Qld Industry Development Corp	20,000.00
22 May	J.S. Love Charitable Estate	25,159.56
25 May	Dr. D. McSwan	400.00
29 May	Sir Bruce Watson	2,000.00
29 June	E.A.S. Pearse	500.00
10 July	N.Q. Electricity Board	3,000.00
31 July	Estate S.L. & E.F. Gluyas	20,000.00
18 September	National Australia Bank	15,000.00
	Sub total 1990 donations	86,559.56

1991

		$
08 May	ANZ Bank	5,000.00
31 May	Kidman Holdings	2,500.00
26 May	EAS Pearse	500.00
27.June	Sir Bruce Watson	2,000.00
28 June	G.N. Core	200.00
28 June	LNE Walker	5,000.00
29 June	Vincent Fairfax Family Found.	10,000.00
05 July	R.D. Logan	5,000.00
13 Aug.	G.J. Landsberg	1,000.00
13 Aug.	National Australia Bank	15,000.00
19 Aug.	Nebo I.C.P.A.	100.00
19 Aug.	Qld. Industry Development Corp	20,000.00
04 Sept	Nambucca Shire Council	50.00
18 Sept	Richmond Shire Council	500.00
08 Oct.	S.B. Collins	100.00
11 Oct.	Burdekin Shire Council	2,000.00
	Sub total 1991 donations	68,950.00

1992

10 Jan	G.N. Core	100.00
26 March	K. Cassamatis	20.00
	Sub total 1992 donations	120.00
	TOTAL	**241,479.56**

ii) General Donations

1989	Queensland Government: Department of Works & Housing - Renovation and Decoration	110,000.00
January, 1990.	S. Achterberg	Acoustic Hood
April, 1991	Bush & Bay Muster - Mundingburra Rotary Club	8,000.00
November, 1991	B. Oxland	Furniture

APPENDICES

FINANCIAL SERVICES DIVISION
Management Services Section
GM:ES
Graham McLeod Ext 4772

23 February 1989

Robin Blyth
BUSINESS MANAGER

ENDOWMENT OF PROFESSORIAL CHAIR

As requested, a calculation to determine the initial capital requirement to fund a chair was made.

Assuming:

- Annual outflow of $123,000
- Cost increases of 7.5%
- Fund earnings rate of 12% and
- A 30 year life span,

the lump sum amount required is $1,900,000. Alternatively, an initial payment of $600,000 followed by two annual payments of $500,000 and a final payment of $460,000 will achieve the same result.

Graham McLeod,
Senior Administrative Officer,
MANAGEMENT SERVICES SECTION

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

POSTAL ADDRESS: James Cook University TOWNSVILLE Q 4811 AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE: (077) 81 4111
TELEX: AA47008
FACSIMILE: (077) 78 6371

In reply please quote: RB : ELC / 464-296

If telephoning or calling ask for: Telephone (077) 81 4782

4 March 1988

The Deputy Commissioner of Taxation
Australian Taxation Office
143 Walker Street
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

Dear Sir,

RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE APPEAL

At its meeting on 3 March 1988 the Council of the University, by formal resolution, established an Appeal Fund within the accounts of the University to be known as the Rural Education Research and Development Centre Appeal Fund. A public appeal will be launched for the purpose of raising funds for the establishment and development of the Rural Education Research and Development Centre.

All monies collected will be paid directly into the Appeal Fund and official University receipts will be issued in each case. Net proceeds, after payment of the necessary appeal expenses, will be used by the University solely for the purpose of the establishment of a rural education research and development centre at the University. The administration of the Fund will be under the control of the University Council.

Approval of the Appeal Fund is sought under Section 78(1)(a)(v) of the Income Tax Assessment Act to enable gifts of $2.00 and above to be classified as allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

The University has previously sought such approval for other appeal funds viz:

1987 James Cook University Anton Brienl Centre for Tropical Health and Medicine Appeal
(your reference COR 595/D/3 dated 8 September 1987

1987 James Cook University - The Ron Sussex Prize in French Appeal
(your reference COR 595/D/3 dated 30 October 1987

In all cases a formal trust deed was not required on the basis that the appeal fund in each case was administered directly by the University. Exemption from this requirement is again sought in this instance.

Yours faithfully,

Robin Blyth
BUSINESS MANAGER

AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE

220 ADELAIDE STREET, BRISBANE 4000

TELEPHONE 222 5011
TELEX 40618

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

Our Reference: 10/R/GFO/COR 595/D/4
Contact Officer: Glen Ward - (07) 222 5015
Your Reference: RB:ELC/464-296

-8 APR 1988

Mr R Blyth
James Cook University
TOWNSVILLE Q. 4811

James Cook University of North Queensland
13 APR 1988
★ RECORDS ★

Dear Sir,

INCOME TAX: JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE APPEAL

Reference is made to your letter of 4 March 1988 concerning the abovenamed appeal.

Gifts to the James Cook University Rural Education Research and Development Centre Appeal are recognised as being gifts to the James Cook University and as such are allowable deductions to donors in terms of sub-paragraph 78(1)(a)(v) of the Income Tax Assessment Act. A formal deed of trust governing the Appeal will not be required for the purposes of the sub-paragraph.

Yours faithfully,

J.E. SCANLAN
Deputy Commissioner of Taxation

YM

Establishment Document
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY OF NORTH QUEENSLAND
THE RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

1.0 TITLE

The Rural Education Research and Development Centre.

2.0 FUNCTIONS

2.1 Research and Development

Conduct research and foster development in rural education, and in particular:

2.1.1 initiate, support and pursue such research and development;

2.1.2 promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activity in such research

2.1.3 undertake contract research and development projects for government and non-government bodies;

2.1.4 support other organisations or research groups in promoting such research and development;

2.1.5 conduct, and facilitate the conducting of, conferences, seminars and workshops at the University and elsewhere.

2.2 Research and Development Training

Provide, through collaboration with appropriate schools, departments and units of the University, training in research and development skills relevant to rural education, including supervision of theses for Honours, Masters and PhD students.

2.3 Teaching

Provide, in consultation with the Faculty of Education and the department(s) whose subjects are taught by staff of the Centre, (as defined under 3.1.1) programs of study at Bachelor of Education and Master of Education level.

2.4 Co-ordination

Assist in co-ordinating rural education research and development and in particular:

2.4.1 prepare annually a compilation of abstracts of publications arising from the Centre's activities;

2.4.2 be perceptive to relevant national and international needs, priorities and developments;

2.4.3 advise the Vice-Chancellor on appropriate responses to relevant national and international actions and policy statements;

2.4.4 act as a repository for and as a mechanism for disseminating information - in particular compile and maintain a current bibliography of rural education materials Australia;

2.4.5 collaborate with other organisations and research groups with related interests.

2.5 Consultancy

Within the limits of available resources to provide consultancy services for appropriate outside bodies.

2.6 Publications

Within the limits of available resources

- publish original research and comment on matters pertinent to rural education;
- produce regularly a newsletter and a rural education journal, reporting research and development relevant to education and training in rural Australia and elsewhere.

3.0 STRUCTURE

3.1 The Centre shall consist of:

(a) Staff, including the Director;
(b) Members;
(c) Visiting members;
(d) Community members.

3.1.1 Staff

Staff of the Centre shall be those persons formally employed by the University to work full-time or part-time in the Centre, for periods of not less than twelve months, on or in relation to rural education.

3.1.2 Members

Members of the Centre shall be University staff engaged in teaching and/or research relating to rural education who have been invited by the Centre Management Committee to become Members.

3.1.3 Visiting Members

Visiting members of the Centre shall be such persons as the Centre Management Committee may permit to work full-time in the Centre on rural education research projects for a period not less than three months. Such persons may be from within the University, from other institutions within Australia or from institutions overseas.

3.1.4 Community Members

Community members of the Centre will be such interested persons or bodies from outside the University as the Centre Management Committee considers have an appropriate interest in the activities of the Centre.

4.0 MANAGEMENT

Subject to the *James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970-1989* as amended from time to time and the Statutes and Rules made thereunder, the management of the Centre shall vest in:

(a) The Director
(b) The Centre Advisory Committee (CAC)
(c) The Centre Management Committee (CMC)

4.1 The Director

The Director shall -

4.1.1 be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor on advice from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities & Social Sciences) for period of up to five-years;

4.1.2 be the chief executive/administrative officer of the Centre and as such be responsible to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences) for the effective and efficient operation of the Centre in accordance with its prescribed functions and subject to the other functions/responsibilities prescribed for the CAC and the Director;

4.1.3 maintain a personal involvement in research and development relevant to rural education;

4.1.4 be active in attracting outside funds for the activities of the Centre;

4.1.5 be, *ex officio*, a member of the CAC and the CMC;

4.1.6 subject in each case to the approval of the relevant faculty, be a member of those faculties in which postgraduate students supervised by the staff of the Centre are enrolled;

4.1.7 represent the University when invited by other groups involved in rural education activities;

4.1.8 subject to the Act, Statutes, Rules and policies and procedures of the University and to relevant industrial awards and agreements and to policies approved by the CMC, have direct responsibility for the control of all Staff (as defined in 3.1.1 above);

4.1.9 consult with and report to the CMC, at its regular meetings, on the operation of the Centre;

4.1.10 furnish annually to the University Council, through the CAC and the Academic Board, a report on the operation of the Centre for the preceding calendar year.

4.2 **The Centre Advisory Committee**

4.2.1 There shall be a Centre Advisory Committee (CAC) with the following membership:

(i) the Director, *ex officio*;

(ii) the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences), *ex officio*;

(iii) the heads of those departments whose subjects are taught by Staff, as defined in 3.1.1 above, of the Centre;

(iv) up to two members elected by and from the Staff of the Centre;

(v) up to two Community Members of the Centre, as defined in 3.1.4 above, nominated by the Director;

(vi) one person elected by and from those undertaking study within the Centre who are not members of the teaching and/or research staff of the University;

(vii) the Chairman of the Rural Education Appeal Committee.

The normal term of appointment of the elected members of the Committee shall be two years.

4.2.2 A member of the Centre Advisory Committee shall be appointed Chairman by the Vice-Chancellor for a three-year period.

4.2.3 The CAC shall meet at least twice a year and shall advise the Vice-Chancellor through the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities & Social Sciences) on the development and operation of the Centre and on the general policy within which the Centre shall operate.

4.3 **The Centre Management Committee**

4.3.1 There shall be a Centre Management Committee (CMC) with the following membership:

(i) Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences) or nominee;
(ii) Director;
(iii) Chairman of the Advisory Committee;
(iv) two members appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences).

4.3.2 The Chairman of the Centre Management Committee shall be the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences) or nominee.

4.3.3 The CMC shall meet at least twice a year and shall have the authority to approve—

. new research and consultancy initiatives proposed by the Centre;
. promotional activities to be undertaken by the Centre;
. affiliations and agreements to be entered into by the Centre with organisations external to the University;
. the nomination of Visiting Members and Community Members of the Centre;
. the Centre s annual budget.

5.0 **Finance**

5.1 The Centre shall receive an annual grant from University recurrent funds as determined by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities and Social Sciences) to support an agreed basic infrastructure in terms of salaries, travel, equipment and maintenance.

5.2 All other monies received by or on behalf of the Centre shall be paid into a Fund established for that purpose by the Business Manager in the books and accounts of the University (hereinafter called "the Fund"). Major sources of funding for the Centre s activities and staffing shall come from grants attracted from funding bodies by the Centre and its Director, and fees paid by the users of the Centre s facilities and services.

5.3 The Fund will be administered by the University on behalf of the CMC.

5.4 Expenditure from the Fund shall be in accordance with the policies and procedures normally followed by the University.

5.5 Ownership of equipment purchased from the Fund shall vest in the University.

5.6 The University shall record the financial transactions of the Centre and as required shall provide the CMC with reports on the Centre's financial status.

5.7 The University will as soon as practicable after each thirty-first day of December provide the CMC with a financial statement setting out the financial transactions of the Centre for the year ended on that date. Such statement shall be certified by the Business Manager to the effect that expenditure of the Fund has been in accordance with the objectives of the Centre.

6.0 **Administrative Policies and Procedures**

The Centre shall operate in accordance with normal University policies and procedures.

7.0 **Status of Centre for University Publications, Statistical and Administrative Purposes**

The Centre shall be treated as a separate entity for University publications and for statistical and administrative purposes.

8.0 **Review**

The activities of the Centre shall be reviewed by a Committee appointed by the Vice-Chancellor within five years of the approval of this document by Council and thereafter at least once every five years. Such a review should include an assessment of research initiatives of the Centre to determine whether and under what conditions any or all of the activities of the Centre should continue.

As amended by Council on 7 June 1990

DUNCRAGAN

the home of RERDC

Dorothy Gibson-Wilde

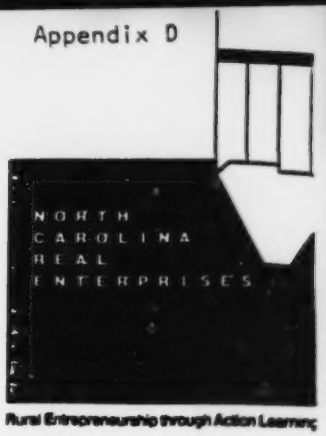
According to reminiscences of neighbours at the time, Duncragan was built in 1917 for George (?) Duncan. Some accounts indicated that the source of the name of the house was a fanciful version of the name "Duncan". It seems most likely, however, that it derives from the village of Duncragan near Loch Venacchar, Scotland.

Duncan owned the Cleveland Foundry, the oldest of three foundries in Townsville. Originally the Townsville Foundry, it was established by Joseph William Hobson on the banks of Ross Creek in 1877. In 1884 it was purchased by MacPherson & Company. They divided the business, retaining control of the hardware and ironmongery sections and forming a shipbuilding company to establish a foundry and slip on the south bank of Ross Creek in the vicinity of the present Curtain Brothers' wharf. This operation, renamed the Cleveland Foundry & Shipbuilding Company after its purchase in 1889 by Messrs. Brand, Dryborough and Burns, made a major contribution to the industrial growth of the region. It catered mainly to the large fleet of small ships servicing the coastal trade from Townsville, then the supply centre of the region, to New Guinea and the Pacific Islands as well as to north Queensland ports and in the fishing, pearl and trochus shelling and beche-de-mere collecting industries. The company suffered setbacks in the early 1890s, first the depression of 1893, and then with the sudden deaths of two of the partners, George Burns and David Brand.

The business continued, however, and Duncan was associated with it early in the 20th century, but the dwindling of the gold mining industry reduced the need of heavy machinery in the area and the extension of the railway to northern ports resulted in a decrease in the numbers of vessels required for coastal trade. The beche-de-mere, pearl and trochus shelling industries also dwindled. Duncan's company foundered. Though a rescue operation was staged and Cleveland Foundry continued in business until recent times, Duncan's fortune disappeared, forcing the family to leave Duncragan. Since the foundation of Townsville in 1864 it had been the custom of wealthier residents to build large villa residences on the hills surrounding the city centre.

Duncragan, a late example of such villas, was one of the largest and most elaborate of these; originally, it boasted a distinctive lookout tower at the eastern corner, overlooking Cleveland Bay. Older residents recalled the house as the centre of many social gatherings in the 1920's when Mrs. Duncan and her daughters entertained friends to afternoon tea on the verandah or at evening functions in the large receptions rooms. It was widely regarded as "the most splendid house in Townsville".

During World War II it was taken over for military purposes; the prominent tower was removed for fear that it would make Townsville easily recognisable to invaders. Sadly, after the war, the tower was not replaced, nor was the house restored to its former glory. In 1961 the house became the first women's Hall of Residence for the University College of Townsville, now James Cook University. When adequate on-campus student accommodation became available Duncragan fell into disuse until it was offered to the Rural Education Research and Development Centre as a "home" in 1989. With support from the Queensland Department of Education, the Department of Works and local businesses the University renovated and refurbished the building creating a very comfortable working environment complete with library and other specialist work and office space.



2 March, 1992

Dr. David McSwan
Director
Rural Education Research and Development Centre
James Cook University of North Queensland
Townsville, Queensland 4811
Australia

Dear David:

Thank you for inviting me to visit Townsville and the Centre. Being there in person provided me with a clearer understanding of both the opportunities and the obstacles facing the Centre today.

You have asked me for a candid assessment of the Centre's current situation, as well as my suggestions about how best to proceed from this point. This is written in response to that request.

I must begin by commending you on the extraordinary work you (and Lady Logan) have accomplished thus far -- especially given the very modest resources allocated by the University. I wouldn't be surprised if an independent analysis revealed that, dollar for dollar, JCU is getting a greater return from its investment in the Rural Centre than from any other unit on campus. The Centre already has made important contributions to Queensland and to the nation.The seconded staff members/doctoral students with whom I talked were impressive and I am confident their research will have both academic integrity and a positive impact on education in the state.

Still, it is the potential of the Centre that is most exciting. While the RERDC has become the *de facto* national clearinghouse and advisory unit in the field of rural education, it has only begun to take advantage of the unique niche it occupies within Australia. It could become far more active in the preparation of rural educators across Australia. Similarly, it could conduct major nationwide research, technical assistance and training programs. I am convinced there is a market for the Centre's services from the individual student level to the state and federal government levels -- and that James Cook University is unusually well-placed to capture this growing market.

Were the RERDC to realize its national potential, it would become a centre having international importance (because no other nation has created a truly first-rate rural education and development unit yet).However, the international connection could and should consist of more than leading by example. I remain certain that JCU is uniquely well-qualified to establish itself as the world centre in this field. The plans we have discussed for a rural education and development Ph.D program drawing upon an *international* faculty and student population strike me as being eminently sound, worthwhile and feasible. Indeed, the Rural Centre could put James Cook University "on the map", internationally, to an extent I cannot imagine being true of any other area within the field of education. Similarly, the international conference you have on the drawing board for 1994 promises to be a much-needed, well-timed and influential event.

My visit to Canberra only reinforced this sense of optimism about RERDC's external prospects. With an election around the corner, all politicians are especially keen to do something new and exciting. Moreover, one of RERDC's great attributes (which must be safeguarded and reinforced) is its appeal to people across the political spectrum. The strong support for the Centre offered by both Lady Logan and Senator Reynolds exemplified the broad coalition that could be constructed.

Based on the meetings I had at the Parliament last month, my advice would be to work closely with the following three individuals: Peter Cochrane (in Simon Crean's office), Norman Abjoressen (in David Kemp's office) and Gordon Gregory (in John Kerin's office). All three have been briefed on the opportunities and needs of RERDC -- and all three seemed genuinely willing to help in any way they can. Obviously, Senator Reynolds and Lady Logan can play key roles in keeping the Centre on the active agenda of these particular elected officials.

One other person you might want to contact sometime soon is Shelagh Whittleston (in Peter Baldwin's office). Although I didn't have a chance to talk with her, she apparently is a key advisor on the selection of Key Centres of Teaching and Research. This is important because I came away from my Canberra meetings with the firm impression that the Key Centre program is a much more likely source of support for the RERDC in the coming years than the Cooperative Research Centre program. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that the CRC program is such a long-shot that it would be a waste of your time and effort to even apply. The Key Centre program, by contrast, seems well worth the effort. Since it is administered under the auspices of the Australian Research Council, I also would encourage you to contact my good friend from OECD days, Prof. Jane Marceau at ANU. Although she is not on the Key Centre committee, she is a member of the ARC -- and a very good source of information and advice.

Capturing the Rural Centre's potential market will not happen by accident, nor will the current opportunities remain available indefinitely. To ensure that the 1994 conference, the international Ph.D program and the Key Centre proposal all have the greatest possible chance of coming to fruition, I think the following steps must be taken in the very near future:

1. James Cook University makes the expansion and enhancement of the Rural Centre a top institutional priority. The University's leadership deserves praise for supporting the creation of this Centre in the first place. Now the time has come to move from allowing its existence to actively assisting the Centre to fulfill its potential. The University must send a strong, consistent message to both private and public sector funding sources that it values the Centre's work highly and cares a great deal about its future. For instance, JCU's leaders backing the RERDC as its #1 (if not its exclusive) candidate for funding through this year's national Key Centres competition would firmly establish the Rural Centre's status both *within* and *beyond* the University. Similarly, maintaining the RERDC as an independent unit reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor's office -- rather than burying it within another administrative entity -- would underscore JCU's commitment to helping the Rural Centre thrive.

2. JCU concretely demonstrates the relative priority of the RERDC by allocating a larger share of University resources to the Rural Centre. From office renovations to operating budgets to permanent staff, the Centre needs more support at this stage in its development. First and foremost, a few additional University positions (at the junior and senior levels) need to be reallocated to the Rural Centre. The RERDC simply cannot achieve its national and international aspirations with a staff that consists only of you, a part-time secretary/assistant and a couple of seconded educators (who simultaneously have responsibilities as doctoral students). The fact that the Centre has precious little operational funding from the University only exaccerbates this fundamental difficulty. The positive side of the story is that this appears to be an especially propitious time for JCU to reallocate some existing positions to the Rural Centre. Designation as a national Key Centre would dramatically improve the RERDC's financial position (and reduce its need for JCU resources). Still, for the next year or two, it appears that JCU will need to heed the tried and true business adage that "it takes money to make money". Bolstering the Rural Centre strikes me as an investment well-worth making. Whether the University's leadership fully appreciates the value of this investment, and has the vision to seize the opportunities the Centre has placed on their doorstep, remains an open question. I can only hope the answer will be affirmative -- and unequivocal.

3. The Rural Centre more clearly manifests its interest not only in rural education, but also in the broader issues and concerns of rural development. RERDC has an admirable track record in terms of attracting private sector interest and support, e.g., Lady Logan's efforts to secure non-governmental funding for a Chair in Rural Education and Development at JCU. For both substantive and political reasons, the Rural Centre should show that its emphasis extends beyond rural children and the schools serving them. RERDC's commitment to exploring and enhancing education's impact upon the vitality of rural communities, economies and institutions should not remain a secret. Such a thrust will generate broad rural support.

4. The Centre continues to identify, and strengthen its ties with, the informal, international network of rural-oriented academics, policymakers, leading practitioners and institutions. For the Centre's plans to succeed, there must be an on-going effort to recruit individuals and institutions sharing RERDC's concerns. My advice would be to gather together a broad, eclectic collection of key rural leaders from the developed nations initially -- and later, from all other interested nations. If one sub-group is to be "targeted" above all others for inclusion in the Centre's work, then I think it should be the top leaders "from the field" -- i.e., the people with day to day responsibility for operating important rural institutions and programs. Most international forums bring together predominantly high level policymakers/administrators (e.g., the director-generals and ministers) while overlooking the people who actually make rural school and community development a reality. The Centre has the chance to learn from past mistakes and to give mid-level, mid-career rural leaders their proverbial day in the sun.

Thank you once again both for being a gracious host and for your continuing interest in my work. I sincerely wish you and the Rural Centre every success.

Best wishes,

Jonathan P. Sher
Founder

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

PROGRAM FOR RURAL
SERVICES AND RESEARCH

November 14, 1991

Dr. Jonathan Sher
North Carolina REAL Enterprises
948 Old Post Road
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

Dear Jonathan,

My apologies for this late response to your letter regarding David McSwan's proposal. I have few comments other than that I am supportive of the effort and would be glad to be involved. (I agree that it would bring folks together and perhaps generate some good research.) I did a Ph.D. at a Scottish University because I liked the program which is much like David's proposal. I have talked with some administrative folks here about funding for a trip to Australia just to test what their opinion would be about my possible connections with the program. Surprisingly they were interested.

We are busy here with planning for some very good prospects for the future. I hope things are fine with you. Please let me know if I can help with anything related to David McSwan's proposal.

Sincerely,

Jack

Jack Shelton

/cj

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